

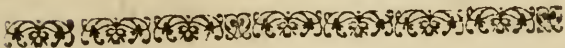
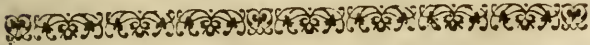
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THE
SIGHS
OF THE
CHURCH
OF
ENGLAND.



Paul cried, &c. Acts xvi. 28.



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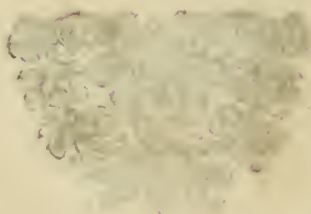


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BRADFORD

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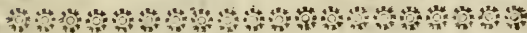


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T H E
S I G H S
O F T H E
C H U R C H O F E N G L A N D .



The C H U R C H *speaks.*



Y dear Children, attend unto the Voice of your Mother, who loves you with Bowels of Tenderness, whose whole Delight is in the Good of her Issue, and whose Prayers always ascend on high for your Preservation. How great are the Yearnings of my Soul for your Health! How constant are my Watchings to prevent your Downfall! And how are my Tears pour'd out like a River, when you fly from the Bosom of your

Mother! When shall my Love be repaid with Duty; or my Griefs be lessen'd by your Repentance? Who will return me the Fruit of my Mournings, and give me Comfort by your Honour and your Glory? I must still complain of my Children, I must still live in the Waters of Affliction, while they refuse to honour their Mother, to build up her Strength, and to make her as the Seat of the most High, as the Hill of Sion, as the true *Jerusalem*. O! all you that pass by me, stand and see if *there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow*; if it has been to any Reform'd, or Protestant Church under Heaven, as it is done unto me! O when will my Wounds be heal'd, my Ruins repair'd, my Wasts and Desolations finish'd, and made whole? When will the Barbarians be check'd, the Licentious restrain'd, the Enemies of different Religions and Interests that persecute me, be subdu'd? When shall I settle upon the eternal Foundation of sound Doctrine, of primitive Government, of an holy and pure Worship, of a devout and comely Order, to the Amazement of the World, to the Honour of Religion, to the Glory of God, to the Establishment of Peace over the whole Earth? Behold! my Children are disobedient, my Government is complain'd of, my Ordinances are neglected, my Ministers are despis'd, my Peace is disturb'd, and the Sons of my Bosom have pierc'd me with many Wounds. Hear, O Heavens, and give Ear, O Earth! What could I have

have done that I have not done? Have not I taught the Truth of God sincerely, given Milk to Babes, and stronger Meat to them who were able to bear it, and the Oracles of the living God to all, in a Language which they best understood? Have I conceal'd any Part of God's sacred Counsel from you? Have not I set forth, with all Plainness and Freedom, the blessed Fullness and Excellencies of my Lord *Jesus Christ*; in such a Manner and Measure, as I receiv'd from the Word and Spirit? Have not I administer'd all the Ordinances of God with Exactness, and the greatest Fidelity? Have I not enjoin'd and taught all Virtue, and all Grace, carefully recommending to my Children *whatsoever Things are good, whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things are pure, whatsoever Things are lovely, whatsoever Things are of good Report*, every holy Duty, every necessary Rule, and every imitable Example, with all the Advantages of sound Knowledge, powerful Preaching, and persuasive Living, which at once were able to inform the most Ignorant, to reclaim the most Erroneous, to reform the most Debauch'd, to satisfy the most Curious, and to silence the most Refractory? Have I not prepar'd, with much Study and Industry, with many Prayers and Tears, with long Education and diligent Care, reverend *Bishops*, orderly Presbyters, able Ministers, Work-men that need not be ashamed, duly ordain'd, and call'd

call'd after an uninterrupted and Catholick Succession throughout all Ages, agreeable to that original Institution which was from *Jesus Christ*, the Great High-Priest, the true Prophet, the Sovereign-King of the Church, the chief Preacher of Righteousness, and Bishop of our Souls?

Have I not taken an holy Care of a *Succession of Ministers* about holy Things, who might divide the Word aright by solid Preaching, might wait upon God solemnly by devout and rational Prayers, might convince Gainfayers by acute Disputing, might instruct the World by exact Writing, might maintain Peace and Order by wise Governing, and might reform the World by holy Living? Has it not been my Care and Endeavour to keep up the Soundness, Power, and Life of the Christian Religion? Have I not labour'd that my Children might, every where, have what is necessary and wholesome for their Souls Good, in devout Prayers, in powerful Sermons, in holy Sacraments, by all which I desir'd (God knows) to preserve useful and saving Truth, to promote real Holiness, to establish a religious Decency, and maintain the wholesome Form and Power of Godliness, in Truth, Peace, Order, and Unity? Have I not held forth a holy Light, Rule, and Life, in the plain Parts of Scripture every where read, in the Articles every Year acknowledg'd, in the Creeds and Catechism every Year explain'd, in the Liturgy constantly us'd, whereby

poor

poor Souls have a plain, easy, and sure Way to Heaven, thro' an unfeign'd Faith, sincere Repentance, a Catholick Charity, a devout Humility, a good Conscience, and an holy Obedience to God and Man, according to the Will of God unto all well-pleasing? Do not I take Care to instruct the Ignorant diligently, to comfort the weak in Spirit tenderly, to raise up them that fall compassionately, to visit those that are sick charitably, to relieve those that want mercifully, to bury my Dead that sleep in *Jesus* solemnly, to punish those that do amiss severely, to restore them that have gone astray pitifully, to instruct them that oppose themselves meekly, to frame a Way of Peace, Order, and Communion (in which Brethren might happily dwell together in Unity) prudently, rationally, discreetly? O! what Failings of mine, then, have occasion'd these impatient Murmurs which I hear? What Faults of mine have rais'd those bitter Reproaches which I bear? What Enormities of mine have provok'd my Children to Disobedience, to unchristian Rebellion, to seditious Tumults? O! why is it that ye, who own my God as Saviour, who have submitted to my Doctrine as your Rule, who have partaken of my Sacraments as your Refreshment and Comfort? O! why is it that ye hate and despise me, that ye strip and wound me, that ye tear and mangle me, that ye made a Scorn and Abomination, an Hissing and Astonishment to all that see me, a
Derision

Derision to my Enemies round about me? Could my Foes have us'd me worse than ye have done, could they have drawn down more Reproaches upon my Name, or debas'd my Glory more than ye my wicked and rebellious Children, who *will not hear the Voice of the Charmer, charm I never so wisely?*

Alas! all Men of Weight and Worth, for Parts and Piety, for Judgment and Ingenuity, for Conscience and Integrity, for Grace, Learning, and Renown, know my Innocence so far, that as to the Foundation of Faith, and Rule of Holiness, I have only adher'd to God's blessed Word; as to the Circumstances and Ceremonies of Religion, I use in them, prudently and charitably that Liberty and Power which I believe is allow'd here for Peace, Order, and Decency, by that blessed God, who is not the Author of Confusion, but of Peace, as in all the Churches of the Saints. If we may believe the Integrity of those Reformers of this Church, whose Learning, Worth, and Piety, has been confirm'd by the Testimony of so many wise and religious Princes, by the Approbation of so many honourable and unanimous Houses of Parliament, by the Suffrages of so many learned and reverend Convocations, by the Applauses of so many other reform'd Churches. If we may believe the Preaching, Living, and Dying of so many hundred excellent Bishops and Ministers, or the Prayers and Proficiencies of so many

many thousands of Godly Christians; or, if we may believe the wonderful Blessings, and special Graces of a merciful God, attesting the Verity, Integrity, and Sanctity of my Christian Constitution for so many Years; or, if you will believe even all Men in *England*, who have, by Oaths and Subscriptions, by Vows and Protestations, resolv'd to maintain the *Protestant Religion*, as it was and is establish'd in the *Church of England*, who despair any where to find the Way of Truth and Peace, of Holiness and Happiness, but in the Use of these holy Means, and in the Exercise of those Divine Graces, which accompany Salvation, and which is, in me, profess'd and enjoy'd. I know nothing excellent in any Church, for outward Policy, inward Tranquility, and eternal Felicity; nothing that is pious or peaceable, moral or virtuous, ritual or spiritual, orderly or comely, or any Way conducing to the Soul's Edification or Comfort, which was not by me entertain'd, with competent Maintenance, noble Encouragement, ingenious Honours, peaceable Serenity, and munificent Plenty, in which I have flourish'd so many Years, by God's Goodness, and Man's Indulgence.

Alas! whatever I have done in the Settlement of the Rites and Circumstances of Religion, I have observ'd that Modesty, Wisdom, and Humility, that became a Church of Christ, in discreetly and ingeniously complying with sober, primitive, and

venerable Antiquity in the Church, as far as it observ'd the Rules of God's Word, and went not beyond the Liberty allow'd in Point of Order and Decency. O! you are too knowing to be ignorant, and too ingenious to be insensible of your Duty to God, and your Respect to me, who was heretofore so much lov'd by my Children, applauded by my Friends, reverenc'd by my Neighbours, fear'd and envy'd by mine Enemies, for those spiritual Gifts, ministerial, devotional, and practical, which were evidently seen in me; those heavenly Influences which People receiv'd from me; those precious Examples, and frequent good Works, set forth by me; the charitable Simplicities exercis'd by my Members; the numerous Assemblies; the frequent Devotions; the awful Attentions; the unanimous Communions; the well-grounded Hopes, and unspeakable Comforts, which thousands enjoy'd, both living and dying, in Obedience to, and Communion with me: All which, to impartial Men, were most pregnant Evidences, and undeniable Demonstrations of true Religion, and a true Church, settled by the joint Consent, and publick Piety of a Christian Nation.

Surely he was a wise, holy, and reverend Son of my Bosom, who said, ' That
' in the greatest Maturity of his Judgment,
' and Integrity of his Conscience, when most
' redeem'd from juvenile Fervors, popular
' Fallacies, vulgar Partialities, and secular
' Flatteries,

‘ Flatteries, he declar’d to the present Age
 and Posterity, ‘ That since he was capable
 ‘ to move in so serious a Search, and weigh-
 ‘ ty a Disquisition, as that of Religion is,
 ‘ as his greatest Design was, through God’s
 ‘ Grace, to find out, and persevere in such a
 ‘ Profession of Christian Religion, as has
 ‘ most of Truth and Order, of Power and
 ‘ Peace, of Holiness and Solemnity, of Di-
 ‘ vine Verity and Catholick Antiquity, of
 ‘ true Charity and holy Constancy: So he
 ‘ could not (a-part from all Prejudices and
 ‘ Prepossessions) find in any other Church
 ‘ or Church-way, ancient or modern, either
 ‘ more of the Good he desir’d, or less of the
 ‘ Evil he would avoid, than he had a long
 ‘ Time discern’d, and, upon a strict Scruti-
 ‘ ny, more and more observ’d in the Frame
 ‘ and Form, in the Constitution and settled
 ‘ Dispensation of the Church of *England*. No
 ‘ where (*says he*) diviner Mysteries; no
 ‘ where sounder Doctrines, holier Morals,
 ‘ warmer Devotions, apter Rituals, or com-
 ‘ lier Ceremonials. All which together,
 ‘ by a meet and happy Concurrence of
 ‘ Piety and Prudence, brought forth such
 ‘ Spirituals and Graces, both in their Ha-
 ‘ bits, Exercises, and Comforts, as are
 ‘ the Quintessence and Life, the Soul and
 ‘ Seal of true Religion; those more imme-
 ‘ diate and special Influences of God’s holy
 ‘ Spirit upon the Soul; those joint Operati-
 ‘ ons of the blessed Trinity, for the Justifi-
 cation,

‘ cation, Sanctification, and Salvation of a
 ‘ Sinner.

Can you blame my *Government*, that ancient and Catholick Government of Godly Bishops, which is so agreeable to right Reason, so suitable to the Principles of due Order and Policy among Men, so consonant to the Scripture-Wisdom, both in Rules and Patterns; so conformable to the catholick and primitive Way of all Christian Churches, throughout all Ages, and in all Places of the World? Would you have me, against all Charity, Modesty, Humility, or Equity, to fall away from the Apostolical Way of all famous Churches and religious Christians? *Shall not I enquire of the former Age, and prepare my self to the Search of my Fathers? For I am but of Yesterday, and know nothing. Shall they not teach me, and tell me, and utter Words out of their Hearts? Shall not I stand in the Way, and ask for the old Way, which is the good Way, and walk therein?*

Would you have me give Offence to the whole Christian World, which either is, or would be govern'd by Bishops, as the most Apostolick, primitive, and universal Way? Would you have me disown the right Succession of the Power Ministerial, conferr'd by Episcopal Hands, unto this Day? Shall the *Jewish* Church have the Heads of their Tribes, as Bishops and Rulers over their Brethren the Priests and Levites and the Christian Church (in Imitation of them. as in other Particulars, so in this) have their
 Apostles,

Apostles, Evangelists, their Pastors and Teachers, without Reproach, and may not I? O! it is certain that which is once well done, in a regular, publick Way, is ever after done, as to the Permanency of that Virtue which is always in a great and good Example. Shall I lay aside primitive and right Episcopacy, which has such Grounds from Scripture, both as to the Divine Wisdom so ordering his Church among the *Jews*, as also by the Example, Precept, and Direction, evident from our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and the holy Apostles, in the *New Testament*, who prefer'd worthy Persons for their Piety, Zeal, and holy Gravity, to exercise a Christian Authority over Ministers and People, for their Souls Good, which might consist with Charity and Humility, for the Preservation of the Church's Peace and Purity, in the best and primitive Times. Such grave Persons as for their Age were Fathers, for their Innocence Saints, for Industry Labourers, for Constancy Confessors, for Zeal Martyrs, for Charity Brethren, for their Light Angels, and venerable for all Excellencies. And I own no other Bishops, but such in whom are the Virtues of the most ancient and imitable Bishops; the Industry of *St. Austin*, the Courage of *St. Ambrose*, the Devotion of *St. Gregory*, the Learning of *St. Nazianzen*, the Eloquence of *St. Chrysostom*, the Mildness of *St. Cyprian*, the Love of *St. Ignatius*, the Constancy of *St. Polycarp*, the Generosity of *St. Basil*, and those who come
 nearest

nearest the Apostolical Pattern, and resemble the most of any Christians, or Ministers, the Grace and Glory of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. I endeavour that my Bishops may be among Christians the most faithful, among Men the most civil, among Preachers the most painful, among Orators the most persuasive, among Governors the most moderate, among Devotionalists the most fervent, among Professors the most forward, among strict Livers the most exact, among Sufferers the most constant, the most compleat every Way, and *perfect to every good Work*. These I take care shall be duly chosen, shall be esteem'd with Honour, and reverenc'd with Love. My Rule to them is, That they should govern with Vigilance, and concert Measures for the Good of those Souls they are entrusted with the Direction of, with joint Counsel; neither levell'd with younger Preachers and Novices, nor exalted too much above the Grave and Elder. I allow these Men an honourable Competency, with Titles of Dignity, wherewith they may exercise a large Heart, and liberal Hand, which may conciliate a general Respect, and merit an universal Love. My Direction to them is, That their Virtue and Piety may preserve the Authority of their *High Calling whereunto they are call'd*; and this in the Order, Peace, and Dignity of the Church, that they may be the Touch-stones of *Truth*, the Load-stones of *Love*, the Standards of *Faith*, the Patterns of *Holiness*, the Pillars

Pillars of *Stability*, and the Centers of *Unity*; such as the Erroneous may hate, the Factious envy, good Men may love, and bad Men may fear.

Can you blame my DOCTRINE, approv'd by the Reform'd, and agreeable with the Primitive Church? A Doctrine according to Godliness, teaching all Men, that *denying all Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, they should live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present World.*

Do you find Fault with my DEVOTION in the publick Worship of God, by Confession, Prayers, Praises, Psalms, and other holy Oblations of a Rational and Evangelical Service, offer'd up to our God by the joint Piety of all my Children, where nothing is express'd as my Mind, which I thought not agreeable with the Mind of God's Spirit in the Scripture? Nor do I know any Part of it, to which a judicious Christian might not, in Faith, say *Amen*, taking the Expressions of it in that pious and benign Sense the Church intended, and the Words may well bear. Indeed, the whole Composure of my Liturgy, is (in my Judgment) so wholesome, so holy, so compleatly discreet, so devout, so useful, so favourable, so well-advis'd, that I find nothing in the eighteen Liturgies, compos'd in the *Eastern* and *Western* Church, that is excellent, but is in this of mine; and many Things which are less clear or necessary in them, are better express'd, or wisely omitted

ted here; the whole being so order'd, as might best inform all Peoples Understanding, stir up their Affections, and quicken their Devotions, in a wholesome Form of sound Words, such as *Moses*, *David*, and the Prophets, and the Lord *Jesus*, left behind them, solemnly recorded in the Scriptures; so that, according to the primitive Care, I first laid down Scripture-Grounds in the Creeds and Confessions; and then I enlarg'd and fix'd my Liturgies and Devotions, as near as I could to the Majesty, Solemnity, Exactness, Unanimity, and Fullness of publick Prayers, upon all holy publick Occasions, so plainly, that the devout Soul knows well what it should desire of God; and so affectionately, that it earnestly desires in it what it knoweth God allows; and so uniformly, that it peaceably goes along with the Congregation, with one Mind, and one Heart, *in the Unity of Spirit, and in the Bond of Peace.*

Is it the RITES and CEREMONIES I impose, that displease you? Alas! I find the God of Heaven, whom we worship indeed, enjoining more Ceremonies on his own People, and forbidding no holy Customs to any Christians, in order to advance the Decency and Solemnity of his Service, or Christians mutual Edification, and joint Devotion under the Gospel. Our blessed Saviour has, by his Spirit guiding the Pens and Practices of the Apostles, sufficiently manifested the Power and Liberty given

ven to the Church, and Governors of it, for the Choice and Use of such decent Customs, Rites, and Ceremonies, as agree with Godly Manners, and the Truth of the Gospel, and may best serve for Order, Decency, Peace, Solemnity, and mutual Edification of Christians, agreed upon by publick Consent, in which every one's Voice is personally included. It's true, as the Liturgy, so the Ceremonies have something of *Rome* in them: For, to deal plainly, I did freely and justly assert to my own Use, and God's Glory, whatsoever, on due Tryal, was found to have the Stamp of God's Truth and Grace, or the Church's Wisdom and Charity upon it. I would not refuse any Good that was found among them, because it was mix'd with some Evil; but *trying all Things, I held fast that which is good*, being intent upon the great Ends of Piety, Devotion, and Charity. It's true, I enjoin my People an inward Worship of Soul in Spirit and in Truth before God; but with all, I enjoin outward Worship of the Body, (which is but a reasonable Service to God that made the Body) exemplary and significant before Men, in such Habits and Gestures, as may most conduce (by the Advice of the whole Church; for the private Spirit of the Prophets, in those Things, ought to be subject to the publick Spirit of the Prophets) to Reverence, Devotion, and Edification, in knowing, humble, meek, and quiet Spi-
C
rits,

rits, rightly discerning the innocent Nature of such Things as are not prohibited, and so indifferent; and the Christian Liberty allow'd to them, to use those Things indifferently when commanded, and to lay them aside when commanded. However, let the many Obligations to Unity, by the Truth you jointly profess, give you more Satisfaction than the Occasions of dividing the Ceremonies, in which you differ, give you Offence; so that you may not, upon so small Occasions, in such small Matters, sacrifice to your private Passion, and Perswasion, the publick Peace and Prosperity of the Church, especially since I never heard of any sober Christian, or truly godly Minister, who (being in other Things prudent, unblameable, and sincere) did ever suffer any Check of Conscience, merely upon the Account of having been conformable to, and keeping Communion with me: Nor did they ever complain of Ceremonies, Liturgy, and Episcopacy, as any Damps to their real Graces, or to their holy Communion with God's blessed Spirit; but admir'd them as the united Influence, the joint Consent, the combin'd Devotion of all good Christians in this Nation, who publickly agreed, with one Mind, and in one Manner, to serve the Lord in a Way allow'd by the most pious of Princes, practis'd by the best Nobility, own'd by the wisest Gentry, maintain'd by the most learned Clergy, and embrac'd by the most under-

derstanding Sort of the Commons. I allow only such Ceremonies as make religious Duties not more pious, but conspicuous; not more sacred, but more solemn; not more spiritual, but more visible, imitable, and exemplary, to quicken my Children, to allure others, to instruct and edify all.

5. Are you offended with my **CANONS** and **INJUNCTIONS**? Is it fit that a few Men, whom Order and Policy have made inferior to others, as the Rulers and Representatives of the whole Society, should prefer their own private Opinions and Judgments, before the well-advis'd Results, the learned Counsels, the pious Endeavours, and solemn Sanctions of so many, eminent for Piety, Prudence, Integrity, publick Influence, and just Authority?

6. Are my solemn **FASTS** and **FEASTS** to be reputed Grievances? Those solemn Remembrances of God's Mercy to Men, in Christ, celebrated with Prayer, Praises, Preaching, communicating to God's Glory, and all sober Christians Improvement, according to the known Precedent of the *Jews*, and the general Practice of the Christian Church? What Harm is there, if some Men, observing a Day, observe it to the Lord; and others, not observing a Day, observe it not unto the Lord?

7. Do you resent my Endeavours for U-N-I-T-Y and U-N-I-F-O-R-M-I-T-Y? Alas! I desire only, that Men may sincerely worship one true God, and profess the Faith of our Lord *Jesus Christ*; that they may be Partakers of the Gifts and Graces of the blessed Spirit, and may have an holy Communion with that adorable Trinity, and with one another in Love and Charity, as Christians, enjoying the noblest Life, the sweetest Society, and most heavenly Fraternity, imitating God, emulating Angels; Children and Servants of Christ's Family, Candidates of Heaven, Expectants of Happiness, Partakers of Grace, and daily preparing for eternal Glory. That all Men who have been call'd, baptiz'd, and instructed, by lawful Ministers here, in the Mysteries and Duties of the Gospel, may make a joint and publick Profession of the Christian Faith, and reform'd Religion, in the Name, and as the Sense of the whole Nation, grounded upon the holy Scripture; guided also and administer'd by that uniform Order, due Authority, and holy Ministry, for Worship and Government, which, according to the Mind of Christ, the Pattern of the Apostles, and the Practice of all primitive Churches, has been lawfully establish'd by the Wisdom and Consent of all the Estates in this Kingdom, for God's Honour, the Church's Safety, the publick Peace, and the common Good of all Souls.

8. Do

8. Do I not allow you a just LIBERTY to do such Things constantly and chearfully, which are most proper and advantageous to the Nature and Excellency of Men? To think what is true, to do what is fit, and enjoy what is just, in Reference to God, others, and your selves? I have taken from you no Liberty, but that of *doing Evil*. You are at Liberty to enjoy all the Comforts, Privileges, and Ordinances, which Christ hath instituted in an holy Order, and regular Way, for private or publick Good; and to hope for that Reward and Crown, which God, the righteous Judge, hath promis'd those that persevere in well-doing. My highest Aim is, that you may have Liberty to exercise a good Conscience, void of Offence towards God and towards Men, that they may willingly in all Things live honestly.

9. Are you displeas'd with my MEMBERS? Alas! innocent Men, they pursue after the Knowledge of, and Communion with God, in order to a rational, religious, spiritual, gracious, perfect, and unchangeable Life; enjoying themselves in the blessed Enjoyment of God, that satisfies all their Desires, rewards all their Duties, requites all their Sufferings, compleats all their Happiness, yea, crowns and perfects true Religion. They endeavour that on *Earth*, which they hope for in *Heaven*, viz. a right Knowledge, and
a willing

a willing Performance, which, as reasonable Creatures, they owe for ever to God their Maker, Preserver, and Redeemer in Christ. With this religious Temper and Frame, of which themselves are only conscious, they prepare for a blessed and glorious Immortality, with a Sincerity of Heart, and Uprightness of Conversation, which hath no other Rule but God's Word, no other End but God's Glory; no other Comfort but the Constancy of this Disposition to the last Moments of their Lives. Innocent Men! they look for one common Salvation; they use one common Sacrament, they profess one Faith, and Rule of Holiness; they have one gracious Temper, the same inward Sense of Duty and Devotion; they walk in the same Order with the Catholick Church, over the Face of the Earth.

10. Do you envy my PATRIMONY and MAINTAINANCE, what the Law of God allows me, what the Gospel has provided for me, what the Piety of elder Times has bestow'd on me, what good Kings, Peers, and People, of their own, endow'd me with freely, *honouring the Lord with their Substance*, that they who serve at the Altar, might live by the Altar? Why may not my Children, that attend the Gospel, live by the Gospel, since they attend a Ministry as venerable in its Mysteries, as glorious in its chief Minister, *JESUS*; as painful to
its

its Ministers, and as comfortable to pious and devout Souls, as the Ministry of the Law? Why are you offended that they of my Children who are taught, should communicate to them of my Children that *teach in every good Thing.*

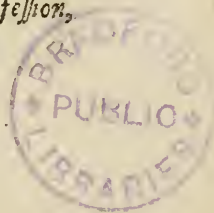
11. Do you malign at, and quarrel with my just POWER and AUTHORITY, whereby, with the Wisdom, Charity, and Integrity of such Men as are invested with that Power, I may check all Abuses and Disorders in the Church, and by a well-order'd Discipline, I may recover my self to my former Glory and Renown, for which I was spoken of throughout all Parts of the World?

12. Do you except against the private INFIRMITIES, the *personal Failings* of my BISHOPS and MINISTERS, as less strict and unblameable in their Lives, less painful in their Callings, less prudent in their Undertakings, or less compassionate in their Government? Tho' all the World knows, that within them Learning flourishes, Knowledge multiplies, Grace abounds, excellent Preaching thrives, Sacraments are duly administer'd, the Fruits of God's Spirit are mightily diffus'd, hospitable Kindness is exercis'd, Christian Charity is maintain'd, Plain-heartedness and good Works are eminent. Tho' I know the Christian

stian World cannot shew Men of greater Distinction than some of my Clergy are for well-weigh'd Knowledge, for Christian Courage and Patience, for sincere Piety, for indefatigable Industry, for Care and Vigilancy, for exemplary Virtue, for sound Doctrine, useful Writing, prudent Governing, for a firm Constancy, for fatherly Instructions, charitable Corrections, and imitable Conversations; who guide the People without any allow'd Licentiousness in Discourse, any Indecency in Devotion, any Irregularity in Administration; in all which, according to the sacred Direction of God's Word, according to the heavenly Assistance of God's Spirit, through Faith in *Jesus Christ*, they teach them to worship the only true God, who is blessed for ever, as the admirable Instruments of God's Glory, and the Good of Mens Souls; teaching them a fruitful and effectual Faith, a sound and judicious Knowledge, an hearty and sincere Love, a discreet and prudent Zeal, a severe and thorough Repentance, fervent and devout Prayers, godly and unfeign'd Sorrow, spiritual and unspeakable Comforts, well-grounded and sure Hopes, a heavenly and holy Conversation, a meek Obedience and Submission in the general Frame of Christian Mens Carriages. Tho' I have Men famous for Greatness of Learning, Soundness of Judgment, Gravity of Manners, and Sanctity of Lives; yet, among my ten thousand

sand Ministers, it is likely some may do a-
 mifs. If when there were but three Men
 in the World, one was a Murderer; if a-
 mong *Noah's* Sons, one of three was disobe-
 dient; if among *Jacob's* Children, of two;
 one was profane; if of twelve Apostles one
 was a Devil, another dissembled, and a
 third deny'd his Master; if among the *Asian*
 Angels, there was none but was to be re-
 prov'd; if among the few Preachers, there
 was a *DEM AS*, *that lov'd the present World*;
 a *DIOTREPHES*, *that lov'd the Prebeminence*;
 among my so many thousand Clergy, it's
 not unlikely that some may fall short of
 the severe Exactness requir'd in all Ministers,
 who ought to be Patterns in good Works.

Oh! my Clergy are not Angels, but
 Men, subject to the like Infirmities with
 other Men. *If they should say they have no*
Sin, they would deceive themselves, and the Truth
would not be in them: But if they confess their
Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive them their
Sins, and to cleanse them from all Unrighteous-
ness. Be Perfection the Glory of other
 Church-Members, the Glory of mine, is Sin-
 cerity. *Without all peradventure, the most ho-*
ly and all-seeing God, who walketh in the midst
of the golden Candlesticks, whose pure Eyes are
most intent upon the Ministers of the Church, hath
found Iniquity in his Servants, the Bishops and o-
ther Ministers, both as to their Persons and Pro-
 D fession,



feſſion, all Things being open and naked to him with whom we have to do.

1. He obſerves how many, conſecrated and ſet apart to the Service of God and his Church, in the Name, Place, Power, and Authority of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and approaching his gracious Preſence, with *Aaron*, in the *Holy of Holies*, in the glorious Manifeſtations of God in Chriſt to his Church, by publick Ordinances and ſpiritual Influences, have not ſo ſanctify'd the Name of the Lord their God in their Hearts and Lives, in their Doctrines and Duties.

2. The great Searcher of Hearts, knows how raſhly many of his Miniſters undertake, how careleſſly they manage that great and terrible Work, under which Angels may ſwoon, and great Apoſtles cry, *Who is ſufficient for theſe Things?* How vulgarly they conſeſſe, how lazily they live, how looſely they behave, how ambitiouſly they deſign, how covetouſly they preach, how enviously they repine, how unexemplarily they walk, unworthy of the Favour and Indulgence ſhew'd them, to the Amazement of their high Calling, the Diſhonour of their Profeſſion, to the Forfeiture of their Dignity, and the endangering of their Peace and Safety.

3. He

3. He that *is about our Paths, and about our Dwellings*, has taken Notice, how unpreparedly, negligently, and irreverently; how partially, popularly, and passionately; how formally, and vainly, without any Power of Godliness, Life of Religion, some perform the Work of God, the great Work of eternal Concernment to our own and other Mens Souls.

4. He *whose Eyes see, and whose Eye-lids try the Children of Men*, hath look'd down from Heaven, and observ'd the Iniquity of some Mens holy Things, their dead and unreasonable, instead of a living and acceptable Service; he hath look'd into that supine Negligence which hath sunk some Mens Ministrations below the just Majesty, Solidity, and Gravity of Gospel-Dispensations; others, by an affected Heighth and Depth, for want of plain Instruction, and charitable Condescension, amuse the poor People, who know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

5. He that will reprove, and set Mens Sins in order before them, hath observ'd some Mens remiss Compliances, and others exact Rigours, (according to their private Tempers, Judgments, and Passions) whereby they swerve too much from that just Charity, Discretion, Legality, and Constancy, which my Canons intended, and my

D 2 Constitution,

Constitution, Health, and Peace requir'd ; especially in their peevish Touchiness, when so many subtile and envious Sectarists lie in Wait to destroy me.

Yet my Church-mens Exorbitancies are not my Constitutions ; their Failings are not my Frame ; their Infirmities are not my Nature ; their Fall is no more mine, who disallow it, than the Angels Fall may be the Heavens, that forbid it. Their Weakness is human, my Authority is divine ; that Charity which *thinketh no Evil*, will not lay upon me those Enormities which I forbid by a Law, which I restrain by Discipline, which I mourn for in mine Humiliation, and discountenance in those great Patterns that shew a most excellent Way. These, Sirs, (*O the Christian World !*) are Transgressions of my Law, Affronts to my Authority, and Obstacles that defeat the wise Designs of my Canons and Injunctions. *O that my Apology were written, yea, printed in a Book, for the Satisfaction of the World ; that the Good I would do, I cannot do, and the Evil that I would not do, that I do. I find a Law of my Members against the Law of my Mind, so that it's no more I, but the Sins and Sinners that dwell in me.*

It's you, it's you, whom I have nourish'd and brought up as Children, whom I have encourag'd as Ministers, whom I have pro-
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moted as Governors : It's you that have brought this Reproach and Danger upon me. When I had with Heroick Patience, endur'd the Oppression of Adversaries ; by a Christian Prudence, frustrated the Attempts of *Schismatics* ; by an exemplary Humility and Piety, turn'd the Hearts of my Enemies ; by a Miracle of one happy and unexpected Revolution in Affairs of State, by securing the *Hanover* Succession, and placing a Protestant Prince on the Throne, silenc'd the Mouths of all Men : You, my Sons, lift up the Voice, strengthen the Cry of Reproach, raise the Clamours of the Envious. *For these Things, I weep ; mine Eye runneth down with Water, because I that was great among the Nations, am become as a Widow ; and was a Princess among the Provinces, am as one that is tributary. All mine Enemies have open'd their Mouths against me, they hiss and gnash their Teeth ; they say, we have swallow'd her up ; certainly this is the Day we look'd for ; we have found, we have seen it. The Lord hath done that which he had devis'd ; he hath fulfill'd his Word that he had commanded in the Days of old ; he hath thrown down, and hath not pittied, and he hath caus'd mine Enemy to rejoyce over me ; he hath set up the Horn of mine Adversary. Oh ! if an Enemy had done this, I could, with the same Christian Courage with which I suffer'd in the Times of Usurpation and Rebellion,*

have

have born it. But it's you of my own Bosom, Family, and Profession. O you my Clergy, whom I expected more glorious, more esteem'd, more reverenc'd before all the World, after your repeated Sufferings; who coming out of the fiery Furnace of your former Discouragements, might shine brighter than ever you did, brighter with the Love of Christ, and me his Church, both as to the Care of those private Charges, and publick Inspections, committed to you in excellent Order, and by due Authority: And I expected that neither Pride nor Envy, Pomp nor Popularity, neither Covetousness nor Ambition, should distract the Thoughts, divide the Hearts, exasperate the Humours, or provoke the Reproach of an incens'd People, against my Order and Government, and the Good of all Sorts of Christians. Whosoever of you, notwithstanding the Miracles of your Persecutions by, and Relief from Popery and Presbytery, at such a Time as this, when the Mouth of Hell is open'd against me, shall open any other Mouth to join in the Cry against the Church, give Life or Tongue to any scandalous Sin; and set that to its *Clamens de Terrá*, crying from the Gound; that by Luxury or Sloth, by Covetousness or Extortion, by Insolence or Pride, by Carelessness or Looseness, by Disorder or Irregularity, shall justify Mens Malice against me, and by those Means perswade credulous
and

and easy People, that all is true which hath been said of me, I know not what Woe is heavy enough for him. O! alas! my Brother! O! it had been better for him he had never been born.

My Doctrine I can maintain, my Discipline I can assert, my Constitution I can defend, my Government I can abide by, my Ceremonies I can vindicate; you, you, O my Sons, I cannot justify! Woe is me, that I must bear your Reproach, and cannot gainsay it.

Altho' I am well satisfy'd (whatever the *Romanists* and other Sects suggest) that my Ordination is authentick, primitive, and proper in the Form of it, and is valid in the Author, being by Men ordain'd in an uninterrupted Succession, by the Bishops of the first Ages, as they were by the Apostles, and the Apostles by Christ, who was ordain'd by God himself, and is regular and legal in the Circumstances of it, being agreeable to the establish'd Laws of the Realm, yet not without much Regret, must I confess, that solemn Investiture of Men to the great Calling of Ministers fallen very much beneath, much sunk in its primitive Sacredness and Reverence, and extremely decay'd in its first Esteem and Honour, because my Right Reverend Bishops have, thro' Inadvertency, on many Occasions,

Occasions; bestow'd the Honour of that high Calling, 1. upon the Young, 2. upon the Unlearn'd, 3. upon the Debauch'd, and 4. upon the Factious.

Woe is me, when I have those that teach before they have learn'd; that I have those that would instruct others, and have need themselves to be instructed, which are the first Principles of the Doctrines of *Jesus Christ*. Instead of the *ancient Fathers*, we have *Children*, who are made *Priests* in all Lands, whose Numbers, as I am credibly inform'd, are more than 3000. Former Times honour'd my excellent Clergy for their Age and Gravity, reverenc'd them for their Learning and Austerity, esteem'd them as the Wonder of the World, and said, *Ask thy Father, and he will shew thee; thine Ancients, and they shall tell thee*. But those which we live in, slight them for their Youth and Weakness, for their Ignorance and Unexperience; as Persons that are but of Yesterday, and know nothing. As the Patriarchs separated their First-born for the Priesthood, and *Moses* and *Aaron* reserv'd themselves many Years for their Ministries, and the Law prepar'd Men 30 Years for the sacred Service; and the blessed *Jesus*, the Preacher of Righteousness, enter'd not until the 30th Year of his Age, upon the great Work of the Ministry: So my Bishops, in former Ages, *knowing how to behave themselves in the Work of God, which is the Church of the living God, the Pillar*

lar and Ground of Truth, took heed to themselves, and the Flocks over which the holy Ghost *had made them Overseers*, that they laid Hands suddenly on no Man, neither were Partakers of other Mens Sins, but kept themselves pure. I had then reverend Men for my Priests, that evidenc'd themselves *Pattens of good Works*; in *Doctrine shewing Un-corruptness, Gravity, Sincerity, sound Speech that cannot be condemn'd*. They were *blameless, sober, just, holy, temperate*; their Judgments were settled, their Passions were allay'd, their Affections were compos'd, their Actions were advis'd, their Conversation exact and uniform. But since every one has done what is good in his own Eyes, my young Ministers have been unstable in all their Ways, unsettled in their Minds, rasi in their Undertakings, impudent in their Carriage, weak in their Discourses, unexperienc'd in their Behaviour, to the Grief of good Men, who esteem all Ministers very highly in Love for their Works Sake, and to the Joy of those evil Men that have ill Will to *Sion*, and cry *aba, aba!* so would we have it.

Oh! am I as *Julian* blasphem'd, the Sanctuary of all Prophaneness? Am I a Refuge for all Licentiousness? Whom a strict College expels, whom a severe University discountenances, whom civil Men note with a Mark of Hatred and Abhorrence,

must I admit to my sacred Order and Honour, with my most holy Ministrations? O! my Reverend Sons, what, do you bring a Man to teach the World, a God, and his Service, who is without God in the World? What, do you send them to speak of that God who is not in all their Thoughts? To what Purpose do they preach an holy Life, who never intend to live it? Why do they put those poor Sou's who are committed to their Care, to pray for those Things of God which they do not desire? To read that Bible which they do not believe? To bind those heavy Burthens on the People, which they themselves do not intend to bear? To teach that on the Sabbath demurely, which they will contradict thro' all the Week prophanely? Alas! one and the same Man, a Divine and a Beast! What, consecrated to God, and devoted to Sin! An Abomination in the holy Place! *Behold, thou art call'd a Minister, and restest in the Law, and makest thy Boast of God, and knowest his Will, and approvest of the Things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law; and art confident that thou thy self art a Guide to the Blind, a Light to them that are in Darknes, an Instructor of the Foolish, a Teacher of Babes, who hast the Form of Knowledge, and of the Truth in the Law! Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self? Thou that preachest a Man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a Man should not com-*

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mit Adultery, hast thou committed Adultery? Thou that abhorrest Idols, dost thou commit Sacrilege? Thou that makest thy Boast of the Law, dishonourest thou God? For the Name of God is blasphem'd.

I am asham'd that Ignorance, which formerly found Preferment, should now find Orders too; and I should settle them legally in that, whereunto I alway said they had illegally intruded. It was too much to suffer the most daring Ignorance, to usurp the sacred Office, much more to consecrate it to it. The Miscarriages in the Days of Anarchy and Rebellion, want nothing to compleat them, but to be *hallow'd*. The Catholick Church never entertain'd a Ministry, but what was qualify'd either with extraordinary Gifts from above, or with human Learning from below, by which the Mind being instructed and improv'd in all the Riches of Wisdom and Knowledge, which are Part of the Glory and Image of God in Man: By this Learning, all Truths are clearly unfolded. How can you think poor Souls can clear up and explain divine Truths, lying hid in the Depth, Darknes, and Ambiguity of original Words, without Skill in Languages? How can they maintain the Truths I have establish'd, and confute the Errors I have condemn'd? How can they detect the Fallacies with which my poor People are deluded, convince the

Gainfayers, with whom I am troubled, and discover those Sophisms in which mistaken Souls wrap themselves; *darkening Wisdom with Words, without Understanding, without the Art of sound Reasoning?* How can they convey the holy Truths they are furnish'd with to others, without an holy Eloquence, a sacred Perswasion and Rhetorick, which may commend them to Mens Minds, and enforce them upon their Hearts? How can they satisfy themselves and others in the Controversies of this Age, without the Observations, Histories, and Customs of former Ages, and *standing in the Ways, and asking for the old Way, which is the good Way, and walking therein, and so finding Rest for their Souls?*

Oh! you are my Sons, why do you these Things? My God above looks upon you, and is provok'd; the blessed Angels see you their Fellow-Servants, (*for you are a Spectacle to God and Angels*) and are griev'd; wicked Men observe you, and blaspheme God; good Men behold you, and are asham'd. Is this the Return you make to a gracious God, to dishonour him? Is this your Kindness to me, to undo me? Is this your Gratitude for the Favours of the Crown, and the fifty new Churches lately built and endow'd by Act of Parliament, to be utterly unworthy? Religion hath honour'd you with an high Calling, you betray it; your Prince has vouch-

vouchsaf'd you Royal Favours, you shame him; honest People have afforded you their Pity and Compassion, you deceive them. *For these Things I weep, mine Eye runneth down with Water.* Alas! alas! for your debauch'd Courses! An holy Calling, and an unholy Life! Spiritual Persons, yet Men after the Flesh! A clean Garment, and an unclean Heart! Servants to God, yet Slaves to Sin! Reverend in your Function, and yet shameful in your Practice! A Minister, yet given to Wine! A Priest, and yet lascivious! In holy Orders, and yet in riotous Assemblies! Enjoining to walk circumspectly, and yet reeling! A Man devoted to the Study and the Closet, in *Chambering and Wantonness!* Standing at the Communion of Saints, yet sitting down in the Company of Scorners! Vile, and yet proud, dishonouring your selves, and yet ambitious.

O! Right Reverend Fathers, enjoin my wholesome Canons severely, visit Mens Steps and Carriages exactly, preside over the Flocks the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers of, carefully: Pity Religion that is a dying; pity me that am decaying; pity your selves that are again falling. Reform my Clergy, and you are safe; neglect 'em, and you perish. Keep up the Life and Practice of Religion, and that will keep you in your several high Stations: For if the Power of it be lost, the Profession of it will
also;

also ; your Calling will fail, your Order will be extinct, and God knows what will be the End thereof: I fear nothing but Sin. I want nothing but true Grace eminent in all my Ministers, whereby they may please God, adorn the Gospel, confute Gain-sayers, and reform the World.

F I N I S.



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